

Message Text

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SUBJECT:KOSRAE AIRPORT

DOA NO.027-TT

1. FOR HIGH COMMISSIONER WINKEL. REGARDING KOSRAE AIRPORT
PROJECT FOLLOWING DRAFT TRANSMITTAL TO OMB WAS PREPARED HERE
ON BASIS YOUR LETTER AND REPORT. PLS CABLE ASAP WHETHER
DRAFT SATISFACTORY TO YOU AND CORRECT ANY ERRORS OF FACT OR
INTERPRETATION THAT WE MAY HAVE COMMITTED. DRAFT READS:

QUOTE, MEMORANDUM

TO: ASSISTANT SECRETARY, PB & A
FROM: DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: TTPI DEFERRAL OF 12 MILLION DLRS FOR KOSRAE AIR-
FIELD, APPROPRIATED IN THE FY 1978 INTERIOR APPROPRIATION
ACT P.L. 95-76.

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO
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DEFER FOR A LIMITED PERIOD THE 12 MILLION DLRS APPROPRIATED
FOR FISCAL YEAR 1978 TO INITIATE CONSTRUCTION OF AN AIRFIELD

AT KOSRAE IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.
THIS DEFERRAL ACTION WAS THE SUBJECT OF A HEARING BEFORE
THE HOUSE INTERIOR SUBCOMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS ON
OCTOBER 18, 1977.

IN RECOMMENDING THE DEFERRAL, THE ADMINISTRATION STATED THAT:

THE FY 1978 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATION ACT PROVIDED 12 MILLION DLRS IN CONSTRUCTION FUNDS FOR AN AIRPORT IN THE KOSRAE DISTRICT OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS. AS NO TRANSPORTATION NEEDS SURVEY HAS BEEN DONE FOR THE KOSRAE DISTRICT, THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOT CONVINCED THAT THE 17 MILLION DLRS AIRPORT THAT THIS APPROPRIATION WOULD INITIATE IS NECESSARY OR COST EFFECTIVE IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF THIS DISTRICT (WITH A POPULATION OF 4,000). THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET HAS REQUESTED THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TO EVALUATE THE DISTRICT'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND TO PROPOSE ALTERNATIVE AIRPORT DESIGNS TO MEET THOSE NEEDS AT REDUCED COSTS, IF SUCH REDUCTIONS ARE FEASIBLE AND COST EFFECTIVE. UNTIL THE EVALUATION IS COMPLETED, THE 12 MILLION DLRS WILL BE DEFERRED.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE TRUST TERRITORY HAS REVIEWED THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF KOSRAE IN TERMS OF AIR SERVICE. HE BELIEVES, AND WE CONCUR, THAT POPULATION SERVED CANNOT BE THE SOLE CRITERION FOR DECIDING THE QUESTION. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL--I.E., MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY--SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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MUST BE CONSIDERED AS WELL AT THE PRESENT TIME. KOSRAE IS NOT BEING ADEQUATELY SERVED ON THE BASIS OF THESE CRITERIA.

OF THE POTENTIAL SITES ON KOSRAE THAT WERE STUDIED IN DETAIL, THE OKAT SITE IS PREFERRED BECAUSE A) IT DOES NOT REQUIRE THE USE OF KOSRAE'S LIMITED LAND RESOURCES; B) THE OVERWATER LANDING AND TAKEOFF ZONES ARE CLEAR OF ANY OBSTRUCTIONS AND WILL HAVE A MINIMUM IMPACT ON ON-SHORE ACTIVITIES, AND, C) THE SITE AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS WILL ACCOMMODATE BOTH AN AIRFIELD AND A HARBOR AT LITTLE OR NO ADDITIONAL COST. IT WAS INITIALLY PROPOSED THAT THE AIRFIELD BE DESIGNED AT 7,000 FEET IN ORDER TO MEET FAA DESIGN CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR ACCOMMODATING AN AIRCRAFT SUCH AS THE BOEING 727. HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT 6,000 FEET WILL ACCOMMODATE THIS SIZE AIRCRAFT. SINCE THE

BOEING 727 IS THE AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY IN COMMERCIAL USE IN MICRONESIA AND THE PROJECTED AIRCRAFT THAT WILL PROVIDE SERVICE TO KOSRAE, IT IS A MAJOR, IF NOT OVERRIDING, DESIGN CRITERION. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT AIRCRAFT WITH MUCH LESS REQUIREMENT FOR LANDING FACILITIES WILL BE IN COMMON USE IN THE AREA.

CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO CONSTRUCTION OF A MUCH SMALLER STOL TYPE AIRFIELD. SUCH A FACILITY WOULD NOT ACCOMMODATE THE COMMERCIAL SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE BETWEEN DISTRICTS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY AND IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SUPPORT SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. TRAVEL PROJECTIONS EXCEED THE SERVICE THAT SUCH A LIMITED AIRFIELD WOULD PERMIT.

COMMERCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AIR TRAVEL PROJECTIONS ARE QUITE SUBSTANTIAL AND THE POTENTIAL FOR THE EXPORT OF FRESH PRODUCE ARE ENCOURAGING. HOWEVER, IMPROVED AND EXTENDED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ARE DEFINITELY NECESSARY FOR THE WIDENING OF MARKET AREAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED, AND UNCLASSIFIED

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IN STIMULATING FURTHER PRODUCTION.

ENCLOSED IS A COPY OF THE KOSRAE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT DEVELOPED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. WE CONCUR WITH HIS CONCLUSION THAT THE 6,000 FEET FACILITY IS FEASIBLE AND COST EFFECTIVE AND RECOMMEND THAT THE FUNDS BE RELEASED TO PERMIT HIM TO PROCEED WITH THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE OKAT SITE AIRFIELD WITH A RUNWAY LENGTH OF 6,000 FEET TOGETHER WITH THE PROPOSED HARBOR FACILITIES. WE REQUEST THAT THIS PROPOSAL BE SUBMITTED TO OMB REQUESTING REMOVAL OF THE DEFERRAL. UNQUOTE. MRS. RUTH G. VAN CLEVE, DIRECTOR, OTA, SENDS. VANCE

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